

ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal Executive Summary

Principle 1: Implementing College and Career Ready Standards and High-quality, Aligned Assessments

As described by the state of Missouri in the initial approved ESEA Flexibility Waiver and updated in the subsequent approved extension, extensive work has taken place in the study and implementation of new standards in English language arts and mathematics. The Common Core State Standards were incorporated into the Missouri Learning Standards (MLS), which include expectations in all content areas. Schools have been encouraged to use the MLS to ensure that all students have access to a well-rounded curriculum addressing the needs and strengths of all students.

The current ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal contains descriptions of ongoing work across the state with full implementation of the MLS, especially the new standards in English language arts and mathematics. The model curriculum written to support these new standards—as well as existing standards in social studies—has been piloted, revised, and expanded to be more comprehensive. A major addition to the model curriculum was the Diverse Learner Amplification work produced through the collaboration of teams of English language learner specialists and core content specialists. The teams analyzed language supports needed for each unit and produced teacher directions and student materials to ensure that all students have equal access to the content. Although the emphasis of the work was the English language learner, the instructional supports are valuable to students with language disabilities and students with language differences.

The establishment of summer professional development educator cohorts has continued. The fifth cohort will form during summer 2015. These educators receive professional development, presentation materials, and then provide training in regions across the state. This training includes updated information on standards and assessment, as well as instructional information for teachers. Missouri's access to the digital resources provided by the consortium for support of the standards has now been accessed by thousands of teachers across the state.

Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

The state of Missouri has utilized the initial ESEA Flexibility Waiver and its subsequent extension to align its federal and state accountability efforts. This aligned system has allowed Missouri to simplify its accountability system for stakeholders (e.g. districts, schools, teachers, students, and the public), while maintaining a high degree of statistical validity supporting accountability designations.

The current ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal grants Missouri the opportunity to present revisions that will ensure the continued ability to provide supports to those schools with the greatest need. To this end, Missouri has amended its required exit criteria for Priority and Focus schools to directly align with the criteria that initially resulted in identification. To exit Priority and Focus status, schools will need to demonstrate that they have not met the criteria for identification in each of three consecutive years and that they have shown an improvement in combined English language arts and mathematics proficiency since initial identification. Further, high schools identified as Priority or Focus will be required to

demonstrate graduation rates of 60% or greater for three consecutive years in order to exit. This amended exit criteria will allow Missouri to identify and exit schools on an annual basis, and ensure that struggling schools receive immediate supports and interventions.

Schools that do not exit Priority or Focus status after the initial three-year period will be provided with an increased rigor of supports and interventions. As part of Missouri's Statewide System of Support, these schools will receive targeted services based on the work of the Regional School Improvement Team (RSIT). Under the leadership of the area supervisor, the RSIT will start the intervention process with a review of all relevant data and will assist the school in the completion of the comprehensive needs assessment. Based upon this assessment, the area supervisor will recommend that one or more the following system audits be completed: community involvement, accountability plan/comprehensive school improvement plan, curriculum and assessment, data, educator effect, finance, governance, parental involvement and professional learning. In addition, the district will thoroughly analyze the reasons for which they did not exit status within the initial plan implementation. This process will drive future improvement by identifying potential pitfalls and ensuring that ineffective strategies are not repeated.

Once the systems audit, comprehensive needs assessment, and past performance analysis are completed, the RSIT will provide targeted supports and will monitor schools frequently for fidelity to implementation of their accountability plan. In addition, area supervisors will convene a monthly regional meeting to be attended by representatives from non-exiting priority and focus schools. These meetings will encourage the exchange of best practices and positive educational strategies. Missouri will provide its updated list of Priority and Focus schools to the U.S. Department of Education by Jan. 31, 2016.

Missouri has used the occasion of the Waiver Renewal to update its policies and reflect the progress made in relation to accountability since its initial Waiver submission and extension. Foremost among these updates is the removal of the "core score". This calculation has been removed from the text of the Waiver, as its use ultimately proved redundant and unnecessary for accountability designations. Additionally, in compliance with federal guidance, Missouri will remove all Priority and Focus schools from eligibility for recognition as Reward schools. Finally, the Waiver also reflects updated tables, charts, and statistics that provide an accurate portrayal of where Missouri stands in its pursuit of its Top 10 by 20 initiative.

Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

As described by the state of Missouri in the initial approved ESEA Flexibility Waiver and updated in the subsequent approved extension, significant development has occurred regarding new systems to promote effective instruction and leadership. This included required alignment by all Missouri LEAs to the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation. These principles summarize the research on evaluation systems that accurately assess educator performance and guide continuous improvement in practices associated with higher levels of student learning. These principles include, in part, differentiated levels of performance, evaluator training on observations and feedback, and the use of student growth

measures in the evaluation process. Alignment must occur in six of the seven principles in the 2014-2015 school year and alignment to the final principle, the use of student growth measures, will begin in the 2015-2016 school year.

Also described in the initial ESEA Flexibility Waiver and ESEA Flexibility Waiver Extension were the model evaluation tools for teachers, principals, and superintendents that were developed and made available for LEA adoption and use. Additional resources included training, guidance, and other tools that were developed and provided to assist LEAs as they align to the Essential Principles.

The 2015 ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal provides details on the extent of implementation by LEAs as they further the alignment of their local evaluation system to the Essential Principles. These details include the Department's process for monitoring implementation and alignment of the six of seven principles. Details are also provided in the Renewal regarding the training and support currently being provided to LEAs to prepare to implement the final Essential Principle, the use of student growth measures, beginning next academic year.